

**Remarks Given by
Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman to the
Women's Economic Development Outreach at Butler University
October 11th, 2007, Indianapolis, IN**

Good afternoon! It's great to be with you today.

I've done a lot of traveling the state as Lt. Governor. The Governor and I like to think of it as taking state government on the road. I look forward to those days when I can get out in my Chevy Tahoe and that runs on 85% ethanol and travel the state. We got it on loan from GM to help promote a great homegrown energy.

Driving around in a car wrapped with a corn mural and an Indiana state flag is pretty conspicuous. But it's a great educational tool to teach Hoosiers about the benefits of biofuels. Quite frankly, it's a great ride! It's a nice upgrade from the government issued navy blue sedans with no hubcaps – we are, after all, a frugal administration.

But it's thanks in part to our frugality that Indiana is witnessing a revitalization. There's a growing sense that our economic stagnation has been replaced with growth spurts and progress. A big key to our success so far has been a statewide emphasis on new partnerships. Public and private working together, not at odds with each other – it's paying off. I want to thank you for your role in those partnerships and your role in creating jobs for Hoosiers. We also thank the future Hoosier employers in the room, as well. We need your continued leadership as Indiana gains momentum.

I heard a story once about three men were hiking through a forest when they came upon a huge, raging river. Needing to get on the other side, the first man prayed, "God, please give me the strength to cross the river."

Poof! God gave him big arms and strong legs and he was able to swim across in about 2 hours, having almost drowned twice.

After witnessing that, the second man prayed, "God, please give me strength and the tools to cross the river."

Poof! God gave him a rowboat and strong arms and strong legs and he was able to row across in about an hour after almost capsizing once.

Seeing what happened to the first two men, the third man prayed, "God, please give me the strength, the tools and the intelligence to cross this river."

Poof! He was turned into a woman. She checked the map, hiked one hundred yards up stream and walked across the bridge.

My point is: I know you've all found success by working hard and using your heads. In all seriousness, you've all worked hard to achieve what you have. Now you're making significant contributions to your professions. You're helping move Indiana forward with your dedication to your work, and your families. The Governor and I appreciate the work you are doing to improve your lives and your community.

When I talk to many women who are leaders in their fields, I often hear a common refrain. They tell me they think they have to be over-qualified in order to succeed. It reminds me of my days as Senate Majority Caucus Chair. As I would try to recruit candidates for open Senate seats, the women were always pretty tough sells. These incredibly competent women frequently told me they weren't qualified. When I'd talk to men, I'd hear a different tune. To their credit, many thought they were born qualified.

Society doesn't ask that women be overqualified, but we often place that burden on ourselves. I suspect there are women here who can relate to that sense of being the underdog and needing to prove themselves.

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

I am, from time to time, the only skirt in a room full of suits, and I know the challenges women face in responding to the call of leadership. Thankfully though, we live in a country and a culture that appreciates women leaders.

Last year, I traveled to Taiwan and Vietnam, leading a trade mission for the state. It was a great trip that produced results, but I came home very aware of the differences between our cultures. I walked into a meeting with some of their top leaders one day and saw that my name plate read "Mr. Becky Skillman." They certainly weren't expecting ME. It drove home the point that not everyone expects a woman to lead.

Back home in Indiana, we have a responsibility to ourselves and to our daughters, our nieces, and all the young women of the next generation—to

step up and do what President Kennedy called us to do years ago. He said, “It is time for a new generation of leadership, to cope with new problems and new opportunities. For there is a new world to be won.”

A rejuvenated Indiana is our new world. And we have some of the leaders and forward-thinkers who will mold the future right here in our presence today.

Leadership is not unique to any one group of people, any one gender or any one age group. Leadership is about action, not position. The challenges we face – age, experience, gender, race – make us work harder and learn more. They develop our character.

You are the people who are driving change in Indiana. You are the ones who are not afraid to do the work that is required to keep Indiana’s economic engine running. As women, you have a unique perspective on that. I am so proud of the contributions Hoosier women are making to Indiana’s rejuvenation. I want to thank you for your part in that – for meeting challenges and seeking opportunities.

It’s been said that opportunity is often been missed because it shows up on your doorstep dressed in overalls and looks like work! But I have met very few Hoosiers who balk at hard work.

I’m a Hoosier – born and bred. I grew up in Southern Indiana, in rural Lawrence County, Bedford, surrounded by farmers and small business owners, and I know firsthand the value and the challenge of hard work. Success requires a commitment to excellence and diligence. The reward of the challenge is satisfying. I think Hoosiers were born to work and we do it well. Even though it’s not easy, we all know it’s usually the hard stuff that is most worth doing.

We all serve our friends and neighbors in different ways.

For the Governor and me, it is every policy – every attempt to be more efficient – every action we take that leads to better jobs, better business and better futures for Hoosiers. For ALL Hoosiers.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

There are more than 6 million people in Indiana – and it’s our job –to serve every one of them. That’s why our focus, from day one, has been Indiana’s economic comeback.

We’ve never operated under the illusion that state government can swoop in and make everything perfect. We know that government can’t create prosperity. But, it can create an environment where YOU can create prosperity. We can move Indiana forward by helping Hoosiers do business, and making state government a partner.

When we assumed office, we made it our mission to create a business-friendly environment and bring in new jobs. And we have made progress in every region of the state.

Thirty years ago, Hoosier incomes were on par with the rest of the country. You could go to work in Indiana and expect to make the same wage as anyone else in America. Today, our people earn only 90 cents on the dollar. That’s not good enough.

We want to make our state the long-term choice for investors – so that all Hoosiers will have more jobs and better jobs. So our children will have the kinds of opportunities that will keep them in Indiana to raise their own families and build their own businesses. We have a long road ahead of us, and our goal is still a long way off – but Indiana’s comeback has begun.

JOBS AND INVESTMENT

We mark our progress toward a comeback every week with jobs announcements, ground breakings and deal closures. Just last month, in addition to the Governor’s announcement, I helped announce three major business expansions here in Central Indiana. I was in Frankton for the ground breaking of a great success story – the Williamson Dairy. That family owned business is the result of good old fashioned hard work and it was a joy to see their business kick off. I was also at Crane for the Grand Opening of EG&G Technical Services. And the Governor and I recently broke ground on the world’s largest soy-biodiesel plant in Claypool.

Companies are consistently turning to Hoosiers to meet their needs for growth. With every new month, a dozen more deals are sealed. Good news is, when we compete with other states, we’re winning nine times out of ten. The majority of those deals are Hoosier homegrown companies who are

expanding here, not moving elsewhere. Our state's economic development corporation is helping Indiana compete and win. We even have programs and seminars geared toward small businesses and homegrown companies – seminars are happening all over the state.

A healthy, thriving economy opens doors of opportunity for us all. That includes the thousands of Hoosier women who are leading our businesses, and the thousands more who dream of taking on new challenges. Indiana's women-owned businesses and women-led enterprises are contributing more and more to our economy every day. And we need the diversity you bring to the table. We also need your leadership – leadership by example.

MENTORS

I don't know how you got your start in your line of work. I imagine most of you have worked your way up, the good old fashioned way. And if you were lucky, you had a strong example to follow as you climbed through the ranks.

When I was getting my start in politics and government in 1976, there were not many women at higher levels in rural Southern Indiana to guide me. I never lacked the inspiration of a mentor though – there may not have been anyone to show me the ropes, but I had someone back home who gave me the courage to try the ropes out on my own. That was my grandfather. He always taught me that I was a competent person and that I could take a challenge.

I am the oldest of five granddaughters. From the time I was very young, Grandpa always spoke to me on his level, like an adult. He had a keen interest in politics and government. He was a disciplined, loyal man, godly and smart. I learned to expect respect from him, and I learned to expect respect from others. It never occurred to me that I couldn't or shouldn't run for public office at the ripe old age of 25. My Grandfather taught me that I was just as qualified as anyone else.

He took the time to listen...to teach...to inspire me to achieve my goals. And, I want to encourage you – if you aren't already doing it – to make time for the women who are coming up the ranks behind you. They need your encouragement and the benefit of your experience.

Your relationships drive change in our communities. Good people build their ideals and their integrity when they come together. Young people especially need time with experienced adults so they can become tomorrow's leaders.

When our college students graduate and look for their first job or their first apartment, you know as well as I do that the community matters almost as much as the career. Every community in Indiana has its own flavor, its own appeal. Every community has a lot to offer the newest wave of workers. Events like this – that provide a forum for new friendships – are an important part of community development. Especially for women. We're very relationship oriented, and I can't think of a better way to encourage success as a businesswoman, than to build friendships. It's part of why you are all here today.

Indiana's challenge is to broadcast our best to the young professionals to keep them here. Many bright students often leave the state to make money and explore. The more we do to instill a sense of community in our cities and towns, the more we'll see Hoosiers choosing to remain Hoosiers and contributing their talents to making our state even better.

Hoosier women – both young and “mature” – have proven time and again their potential for greatness. I know—I've listened to their stories as I've traveled around the state. It's our responsibility to help the next generation recognize that potential and run with it!

CONCLUSION

Indiana is so full of opportunity. We see evidence of that every day.

We can all learn from examples of women who've proven that. The famous Madame CJ Walker; Angela Braley, the new CEO of Wellpoint, France Cordova, the first female president at Purdue. Success comes through many different experiences – some learn by doing, others have advanced degrees – but be sure of one thing. Every success story in this room and in our history came on the back of hard work.

So, the questions I'll leave you with are simple. Are you willing to do the work? Are you willing to complete even the smallest task with excellence? Diligence in the small, will lead us to the great, one success at a time. Indiana IS a new world. I invite you to take advantage of the opportunities

that are knocking on your door – especially the ones that are dressed like work.

Thanks for having me today.